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'CHARTing' Humanitarian Assistance Course in Yokosuka  
By Bill Doughty, U.S. Naval Hospital Yokosuka Public Affairs

YOKOSUKA, Japan - Experts say keeping the peace has become as challenging as winning a war. Nations, militaries and non-governmental organizations must often work together to provide a safe environment for civilian populations in the wake of conflict, natural disasters or social change.

That's the key message of the Combined Humanitarian Assistance Response Training (CHART) course held June 9-13 in Yokosuka, Japan.

The course shows how different groups - military, civilian, non-governmental or host nation agencies - can work as a team in providing humanitarian assistance.

CHART was presented to a diverse international audience. Health care providers from the Army, Air Force and Navy (from both fleet and shore commands) attended with colleagues from the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force.

Instructor Lt. Col. Patricia Hastings, deputy commander for clinical services at Irwin Community Hospital in Fort Riley, Kan., was pleased to reach a multicultural group.

"This is an international audience here, and it's very good. We have to work together with our partners," said Hastings. "If we learn a common language, have common goals and put together a coordinated response, we're going to do better."

According to Capt. Mark Llewellyn, fleet surgeon for commander, U.S. 7th Fleet, "Obviously here, working and training together with our Japanese hosts is something we're doing more and more - in this situation under the leadership of Capt. Robinson, CO (commanding officer) of the hospital, and Capt. Norcross, medical director."

During the course, Capt. Adam M. Robinson, Jr., Medical Corps, commanding officer of U.S. Naval Hospital Yokosuka, presented a riveting account of his own humanitarian mission to Haiti in 1999, as CO of Fleet Hospital Jacksonville during Operation New Horizon/Uphold Democracy.

The CHART course includes a focus on prevention of human misery in a changing world.

"Part of what we need to do is plan for the future," said Ditzler, "not simply to respond to horrific problems, but hopefully to establish social systems and cultural institutions that will mitigate the effects of change in ways that will prevent, if we're lucky, some of the sadder chapters in our history."

U.S. Naval Hospital Yokosuka trains frequently to be ready to respond to any medical contingency, including natural disasters.

"I'm hoping we won't have to be using any of the information that's being put out today," said Lt. Eric Acoba, a physical therapist on USS Kitty Hawk (CV

63), "but, if nothing else, it gives us a bigger picture of our different roles. Obviously, in military medicine, we play multiple roles."

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#### Leaders Laud Efforts of Hospital Corps

By Bill Doughty, U.S. Naval Hospital Yokosuka Public Affairs

YOKOSUKA, Japan - The Navy's Hospital Corps became a century-plus-five June 17. The elite cadre of Navy "docs" is trained, ready, and steaming to assist, rendering life-saving care in muddy rice paddies, wind-blown deserts and rolling seas.

According to Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) Terry Scott, who visited Yokosuka in April, "The hospital corps legacy is well-established and goes back decades. When you see the true care and concern that they have for their service members, it transcends just being a job."

Scott adds, "It's hard to express in terms, but the level of dedication that I've seen in Navy corpsmen to their fellow service members is unsurpassed."

During a recent visit to Sasebo Naval Base, Capt. Lynn Hunter, incoming Pacific Fleet surgeon and current commanding officer of Naval Hospital Bremerton, gave high praise to Navy corpsmen.

"I think in Operation(s) Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, hospital corpsmen have again proven that they are really a treasured asset," she said.

"I could see that when I visited Fleet Hospital 8. It was a most remarkable experience," said Hunter. "One night, there were about 50 patients that came in to Casualty Receiving, which was set up in a long wing of the temper tent. There was one emergency doctor on one end and one emergency doctor on the other end, and there were a couple of nurses ... but, in between, the work on all those patients was being done by hospital corpsmen."

Most of the corpsmen who staffed Fleet Hospital 8 in Rota, Spain, came from Hunter's command, Naval Hospital Bremerton.

"And it was quiet," Hunter adds. "These folks had drilled so extensively that it was like watching a ballet or a fine orchestra being conducted, and I was just bursting with pride."

Corpsmen are "first responders," emergency medicine-trained lifesavers on the scene in natural disasters and industrial accidents.

Today's hospital corpsmen assist in the prevention and treatment of disease and injury. They assist with physical examinations, patient care, medical records and administering medications. They perform general laboratory, pharmacy, radiology and other patient support services.

Hospital corpsmen are leaders and mentors. They serve as command master chief petty officers and in other leadership positions. The Sailor of the Year for Commander, Naval Forces Japan is a corpsman - Hospital Corpsman 1st Class (SW) Todd Wende, fleet medical liaison for U.S. Naval Hospital, Yokosuka, Japan.

Corpsmen perform administrative, supply and accounting procedures within medical departments ashore, afloat and with Marine Corps. They instruct medical and non-medical personnel in first aid, self-aid, personal hygiene, preventive medicine and personal readiness.

These often-complex duties require each hospital corpsman to have exceptional training, versatility and empathy and to be always ready for the day they may hear, "Corpsman Up!"

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#### TRICARE Europe Meets in Naples

By Journalist 1st Class Jefferey Pierce, Commander, Navy Region Europe Public Affairs

NAPLES, Italy - Twice a year, all military medical and dental facility commanders and key TRICARE Europe personnel come together.

The latest of these meetings was held recently at Naval Support Activity Naples. The purpose of the meetings was to update all military medical and dental commanders around Europe on the latest TRICARE Europe information, and get feedback from these commanders to help steer the TRICARE Europe program.

The topics presented during the meeting covered a broad array of issues

important to health care delivery in the region. There was also a focus on lessons learned from the current military operations and host-nation health care quality.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, Edward P. Wyatt Jr., was the keynote speaker for the meeting. According to Wyatt, meetings like this one are the preferred form of communication.

"There's nothing really like face-to-face contact for an extended period of time to really understand the needs, goals, frustrations and successes of people deployed overseas," Wyatt said. "That's why it's so important to come to meetings like this."

According to Brig. Gen. Elder Granger, Europe's regional medical commander and U.S. Army Europe Command surgeon, these meetings keep everyone informed of the latest information.

"These meetings allow us to take the latest information as provided by the TRICARE Management Activity in Washington, D.C., so we can disseminate it to medical and dental treatment facility commanders," Granger said.

"In addition, we bring in a senior leader from the assistant secretary of defense for health affairs office. This allows us to get the latest updates from Washington, plus from a TRICARE Europe perspective. We provide them with the latest updates that we disseminate throughout our region."

Providing health care to service members can be a difficult task, but for Wyatt, TRICARE is his number one priority.

"There's nothing more important to the assistant secretary of defense for health affairs and myself, than making sure that TRICARE becomes and remains the provider of choice for health care services for our beneficiaries," Wyatt said. "We have people scattered all over the globe, and it can be a challenge, making sure that we have these programs in place where our people are located."

According to Granger, TRICARE Europe is making sure that the health care needs of its customers are being met.

"We have a very robust preferred provider network, so if we cannot provide the health care in our day-to-day medical treatment facilities, we have host-nation providers where we have validated their ability, as well as their quality to take care of our beneficiaries," Granger said.

So, what can service members and their families expect from TRICARE in the future? Granger explains where TRICARE Europe is headed.

"TRICARE Europe is just like TRICARE in the United States. It is the best health care benefit anywhere in the world. In the near future, there will be a TRICARE dental benefit for retirees. In addition we have TRICARE online that any active duty or Reserve service member, as well as retirees, can use," Granger said.

"A new program called TRICARE Prime Remote, under contract with S.O.S. International, is in place to take care of our families who are not located near our health care facilities. This program will assist families with making appointments at the right place with the right providers, to take care of their health care needs."

According to Wyatt, the military health system will change as the military changes.

"We will do everything we have to do to continue to be the provider of choice for active duty members and their families' health care needs. As our military transforms, so will we," Wyatt said.

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#### Blood Checks Lead to Healthier Lifestyle

By Journalist 1st Class (SW/AW) Steven Bansbach, Naval Reserve Readiness Command Northeast Public Affairs

NEWPORT, R.I. - By living up to their motto, putting prevention into practice, Health Promotions at Naval Station Newport, R.I., stopped by Naval Reserve Readiness Command to do an annual cholesterol and glucose check on service members willing to give blood.

"Heart disease and diabetes are becoming an epidemic," according to Lt. Laura Hartjen, Nurse Corps. "With this screening, our primary focus is prevention of the two biggest killers in the country."

Personnel were reminded not to eat or drink anything after midnight, so test results would be accurate. Once the hospital has the results, a dietician meets with everyone individually to discuss lower ones risks.

When the blood is taken back to the lab, it is spun down, and the cholesterol and glucose are separated.

"There will be a total cholesterol count, a LDL and HDL cholesterol count and a triglycerides count," said Hartjen.

But not all cholesterol is bad.

"LDL cholesterol is bad. You can get that from red meats, organ meat, milk products, just to name a few. The HDL is the good kind of cholesterol; you can raise that by participating in aerobic activity. Your triglycerides are determined by your weight, alcohol consumption and concentrated sweets," Hartjen noted.

This blood draw is just another way that health promotions is educating personnel and helping them live a longer, healthier life.

"The more they know, the better off they'll be, living a longer healthier life. Prevention is the key," Hartjen said.

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Healthwatch: Vision Research Looks To Safeguard Your Sight

By Aveline V. Allen, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery Public Affairs

WASHINGTON - Can you see clearly? Your vision is one of the most important and vital senses you have. Maintaining good vision health is paramount to your overall health, and research efforts continue to ensure we preserve our vision as we grow older.

According to Lt. Tyson Brunstetter, Medical Service Corps, research optometrist at Naval Aerospace Medical Research Laboratory (NAMRL), Pensacola, Fla., "Navy vision scientists focus heavily on the warfighter, but we also make every effort to positively impact society as a whole."

He points out that Navy studies have developed advances in ocular diagnostic, treatment, and surgical techniques.

"Future work will be focused on promoting and/or accelerating the healing of the cornea and retina," said Brunstetter. "We are very concerned that 12 million Americans currently suffer from some form of irreversible visual impairment."

Currently, a very large effort is being made to make people aware through a program called "Vision Research...A National Plan: 1993-2003". This effort is co-sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Eye Institute (NEI), and the National Advisory Eye Council. The major goal of this initiative is to preserve eyesight by conducting research, training, and informing people of the most recent advancements in visual health.

Vision research experts are working toward achieving the following goals through this plan: assessing the impact of eye disease and visual impairment on the nation's health, developing effective strategies for screening of eye disease and visual impairment in children and adults, and determining the most appropriate diagnostic and treatment options to improve vision and preserve sight.

In addition to vision research information and facts, this plan will also focus on certain eye-related conditions such as cataracts, glaucoma, retinal and corneal diseases, and visual impairment and rehabilitation.

"Over 70 percent of our body's sensory input enters through the eyes, so any visual impairment can drastically affect a person's quality of life," said Brunstetter. "My best advice is to protect this vital sense and take advantage of the latest advances in vision research by regularly visiting your family optometrist or ophthalmologist."

Further information on vision research can be found at [www.onr.navy.mil](http://www.onr.navy.mil) or [www.nei.hih.gov/health/index.htm](http://www.nei.hih.gov/health/index.htm).

Editor's note: June is Vision Reseach Month

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